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Subject: Community Liaison thoughts from Katrina Experience"s
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Thoughts on Community Liaisons in the field:

Background:

During the Hurricane Katrina response I was the first 90 dayer as we were called that came in for long rotations during the response. I served that rotation for 103 days without a trip back to Dallas.

The road conditions were bad so I instituted that we always travel in pairs and no one went out alone. There were times when more traveled together for a given purpose. We were seeking out businesses which is different than going to one location everyday where lots of people are gathered. That is a wonderful idea that is very efficient with resources. The teams of two allowed for a driver and navigator. Cell phones had spotty coverage in places and each person with different carriers were often needed to get a cell single to get a call out. Texting is so common now and texting often works when a call won't go through.

We had people call in daily to report status in the afternoon so we knew everyone was safe. One staff person was in a traffic jam on the Huey P Long bridge and the lights were out on the bridge. That is a scary bridge in the daytime and it was dark when this happened to her. She called to let us know. She had taken an afternoon off on a weekend day to visit family and called us before her cell phone battery ran out of power. We had another incident of a ferry crossing from one side to another that took was required to get to the other side. A vehicle not one of ours impacted the ferry and was on the news. Our people were safe but they called to let us know they would be delayed. This communication is very important that staff check in so we know everyone is safe.

We purchased paper maps locally of the area because road signs were down. Some roads were closed. These could change as the CORP and others came in to do debris removal. Whether or not teaming of two is needed depends on the conditions. The safety conditions will be discussed at every morning meeting.

And that all that time allows for now... Good luck everyone!!

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